

CLAIMS

1. A system that provides information to a second passenger vehicle, to create an information network between the second passenger vehicle and an information source, the system comprising:
- 5 a first transmitter/receiver unit disposed on a first passenger vehicle and adapted to receive an information signal that includes the information from the information source, and to transmit the information signal;
- a third transmitter/receiver unit adapted to receive the information signal and to transmit the information signal, to provide the information signal between the first
- 10 transmitter/receiver unit and the second passenger vehicle;
- a second transmitter/receiver unit located on the second passenger vehicle, the second transmitter/receiver unit being adapted to receive the information signal; and
- a passenger interface coupled to the second transmitter/receiver unit and adapted to provide at least some of the information for access by a passenger associated with the
- 15 second passenger vehicle.
2. The system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the third transmitter/receiver unit is located on a fixed platform.
- 20 3. The system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the second passenger vehicle is in an area where no satellite coverage is available.
4. The system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the second passenger vehicle is in an area where satellite coverage is available.
- 25 5. The system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the information signal comprises a video programming signal.
6. The system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the information maintenance
- 30 information for the second passenger vehicle.

7. The system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the information comprises positional information of the first passenger vehicle.
8. The system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the information comprises vital
5 information for the passenger.
9. The system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the information comprises Internet-related data.
10. 10. The system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the information comprises telecommunications data.
11. The system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the information comprises weather information.
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12. The system as claimed in claim 1 wherein the third transmitter/receiver unit is located on a third passenger vehicle.
13. The system as claimed in claim 12, wherein each of the first, second and third
20 passenger vehicles travels along a line of travel, and wherein the receipt of the information signal and transmission of the information signal between each of the first, second and third passenger vehicles is along the line of travel.
14. The system as claimed in claim 13, wherein each of the first, second and third
25 passenger vehicles is an aircraft and the information network is a sky network.
15. The system as claimed in claim 14, wherein the aircraft are located on a flight track, and wherein the line of travel is along the flight track.

16. The system as claimed in claim 13, wherein each of the first, second and third passenger vehicles is a ground vehicle, and wherein receipt of and transmission of the information signal between the ground vehicles creates a network for the information signal.

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17. The system as claimed in claim 12, wherein the third transmitter/receiver unit is further adapted to transmit the information signal to at least one additional receiver.

18. The system as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a directional antenna having focused transmit and reception patterns that is coupled to the first transmitter/receiver unit and is adapted to receive and transmit the information signal.

19. The system as claimed in claim 18, further comprising a radome that at least partially surrounds the antenna and that is transmissive to the information signal provided to and from the antenna.

20. The system as claimed in claim 1, further comprising an omni-directional antenna that is coupled to the first transmitter/receiver unit and is adapted to receive and transmit the information signal.

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21. The system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the second transmitter/receiver unit is located on a satellite.

22. The system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the source is located on the first passenger vehicle.

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23. The system as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a second passenger interface coupled to the first transmitter/receiver unit that is adapted to provide at least some of the information to a passenger associated with the first passenger vehicle.

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24. A method for providing information from a source to a second passenger vehicle, the method comprising acts of:

receiving an information signal that includes the information at a first passenger vehicle;

re-transmitting the information signal from the first passenger vehicle;

receiving the information signal and re-transmitting the information signal to

5 provide the information signal between the first passenger vehicle and the second passenger vehicle;

receiving the information at the second passenger vehicle; and

providing at least some of the information for access by a passenger associated with the second passenger vehicle.

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25. The method as claimed in claim 24, wherein the acts of receiving the information signal and re-transmitting the information signal to provide the information signal between the first passenger vehicle and the second passenger vehicle include receiving the information signal at a fixed platform and re-transmitting the information signal from the
15 fixed platform.

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26. The method as claimed in claim 24, wherein the acts of receiving and re-transmitting the information signal include receiving and re-transmitting a video programming signal.

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27. The method as claimed in claim 24, wherein the acts of receiving and re-transmitting the information signal include receiving and re-transmitting maintenance information for the second passenger vehicle.

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28. The method as claimed in claim 24, wherein the acts of receiving and re-transmitting the information signal include receiving and re-transmitting positional information of the first passenger vehicle.

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29. The method as claimed in claim 24, wherein the acts of receiving and re-transmitting the information signal include receiving and re-transmitting vital information for the passenger.

30. The method as claimed in claim 24, wherein the acts of receiving and re-transmitting the information signal include receiving and re-transmitting Internet-related data.

5 31. The method as claimed in claim 24, wherein the acts of receiving and re-transmitting the information signal include receiving and re-transmitting telecommunications data.

10 32. The method as claimed in claim 24, wherein the acts of receiving and re-transmitting the information signal include receiving and re-transmitting weather information.

15 33. The method as claimed in claim 24, wherein the acts of receiving the information signal and re-transmitting the information signal to provide the information signal between the first passenger vehicle and the second passenger vehicle comprise receiving the information signal at a third passenger vehicle and re-transmitting the information signal from the third passenger vehicle.

20 34. The method as claimed in claim 33, wherein the acts of transmitting and re-transmitting the information signal include transmitting and re-transmitting the information signal between the first, second and third passenger vehicles along a line of travel of the first, second and third passenger vehicles.

25 35. The method as claimed in claim 34, wherein the first, second and third passenger vehicles are aircraft, and wherein the acts of transmitting and re-transmitting the information signal include transmitting and re-transmitting the information signal between the aircraft along a flight track along which the aircraft are traveling.

30 36. The method as claimed in claim 33, wherein the first, second and third passenger vehicles are ground vehicles, and wherein the acts of transmitting and re-transmitting the information signal include transmitting and re-transmitting the information signal between the ground vehicles to create a network for the information signal.

37. The method as claimed in claim 33, wherein the act of re-transmitting the information from the third passenger vehicle includes re-transmitting the information signal to the second passenger vehicle and to at least one additional passenger vehicle.

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38. The method as claimed in claim 24, wherein the acts of re-transmitting the information signal are performed by re-transmitting the information signal in a focused transmit pattern.

10 39. The method as claimed in claim 24, wherein the acts of re-transmitting the information signal are performed by re-transmitting the information signal in an omnidirectional pattern.

40. The method as claimed in claim 24, wherein acts of receiving the information
15 signal and re-transmitting the information signal to provide the information signal between the first passenger vehicle and the second passenger vehicle include receiving the information signal at a satellite and re-transmitting the information signal from the satellite.

20 41. The method as claimed in claim 24, wherein the act of receiving the information signal at the first passenger vehicle includes receiving the information signal from a source located on the first passenger vehicle.

42. The method as claimed in claim 24, further comprising an act of providing at least
25 some of the information to another passenger associated with the first passenger vehicle.